



# School Safety Newsletter

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## Top Ten Reasons You Need to Change Your Password

Lieberman Technologies, June 23, 2015

<https://www.ltnow.com/reasons-change-password/>

As a tech company, we talk a lot about security issues, both internally and in discussions with our customers. The businesses we work with rely on us to give them solid guidance and to provide tech solutions that are reliable and secure. While no piece of software and no digital business system is 100% hacker-proof, I like to think that we do a pretty good job for our customers when it comes to providing them a secure means with which to conduct business online. But no matter how many layers of security you have in place, there always seems to be one chink in the armor: passwords.



At home or at work, your passwords can be the weakest link in your chain of security. Think about your online accounts and the passwords you use to access them. If you catch yourself saying any of the following, your passwords might need another look.

1. “My password isn’t too long or too short, it’s just right.” If your password consists of 8 or fewer characters, it may not actually be “just right.” The longer and more varied your password, the more secure it is.
2. “My password uses both letters and numbers.” That’s a good start, but adding a special character or two can help with making your password more varied. Go ahead, embrace a \$ or ? or two.
3. “I use the same password for more than one site or service.” I get it – you’ve got a lot of online accounts and it’s easier to use the same password to access all of them. But if a hacker got into one site using your password, it’s possible they could access others using that same password.
4. “It’s easy to memorize.” If it’s your anniversary, your birthday, your favorite band, or anything similar, all it takes is a little knowledge of your personal life and a hacker can be off to the races with your information.
5. “It’s so obvious no one would guess it.” Guess again. The king of the guessable passwords is...”password.” Sound familiar?
6. “It’s a word no one would guess.” The fact that you’re using an actual word means it could be guessed. Password cracking software can run through every word in the dictionary in a matter of seconds, and if you’re using a real word, you’re asking for trouble.

*Protecting our  
future through  
information  
sharing*

### In This Issue

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## Top Ten Reasons You Need to Change Your Password (continued)

7. "It's my dog's/cat's/mom's name." Once again, all it takes is a little knowledge of your personal life, which really isn't all that hard to find out. Even if your dog's/cat's/mom's name is Gertrude.
8. "It doesn't matter because I don't have much." You may not have much, but if a hacker is intent on stealing your identity, you'll have even less... and possibly a lot more debt or even a criminal record before it's over.
9. "Two-factor authentication? What's that?" Using a single factor to gain access to your online accounts means that anyone can access your information from anywhere, which means critically important accounts like your bank or email could be compromised long before you realize it.
10. "I save my passwords in a password-protected Excel spreadsheet/handy notebook/3x5 card in my wallet." Having all of your passwords in a single, easily-hackable place is a dangerous method of operation. Password-protecting an Excel spreadsheet doesn't encrypt your files, and someone could crack your password and have instant access to all of your passwords in one location. The same goes for passwords written down anywhere – if anyone gets their hands on your crib sheet, your life is wide open for all to see.

Yikes! Now what?

After reading that list you might be thinking, "It's like you're inside my head!" If any of those top ten reasons sound familiar to you, take that as a definite signal you need to do something about the state of your passwords. Fortunately, I've got some very specific steps for you to take:

- Assess each of your passwords; if they fit ANY of the criteria above, change them.
- Invest in a password manager. Some examples can be found at: <https://www.ltnow.com/password-managers-better-security/> (Pro tip: a password manager can help you assess and change your weak passwords, quickly and easily. It can also help you to create a secure password each time you open another online account.)
- Turn on two-factor authentication wherever you can. Information can be found at: <https://www.ltnow.com/2-step-verification/> (a list of sites offering it at: <https://twofactorauth.org/>)

Doing something about the state of your passwords might take a little bit of effort on your part, but in the long run it will help to protect you and your travels online. Just ask anyone who's had their online life compromised in some way. It's not fun, and it's a rude awakening to the reality of poor passwords. Don't let it happen to you!

## The Problem with Passwords

Cybersecurity, January 27, 2011

[http://www.bloomberg.com/bw/magazine/content/11\\_06/b4214036460585.htm](http://www.bloomberg.com/bw/magazine/content/11_06/b4214036460585.htm)

Most-used passwords: 123456, password, 12345678, qwerty, abc123

Time it takes a hacker's computer to randomly guess your password:

| Length       | Lowercase only | Lowercase + Uppercase | Lowercase + Uppercase + Numbers and Symbols |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------------|---|
| 6 characters | 10 minutes     | 10 hours              | 18 days                                     |
| 7 characters | 4 hours        | 23 days               | 4 years                                     |
| 8 characters | 4 days         | 3 years               | 463 years                                   |
| 9 characters | 4 months       | 178 years             | 44,350 years                                |

**Monthly  
Webinars!**

First  
Wednesday  
of Every  
Month at 10  
am.

**Next  
Webinar -  
August 12,  
2015**

Each webinar  
has a round  
table discussion  
at the end.  
Questions are  
always  
welcome!

To participate, you  
must be a vetted  
member. For

School violence not only has a direct impact on students, but also on educators, parents, and the entire community. This report analyzes the most recent data available on school crime and student safety. The latest in a series of annual publications produced jointly by the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Education Statistics, the report details victimization, teacher injury, bullying and cyber-bullying, school conditions, fights, weapons, availability and student use of drugs and alcohol, student perceptions of personal safety at school, and criminal incidents at postsecondary institutions. The information was drawn from a variety of federal data sources, including national surveys of students, teachers, principals, colleges, and universities.

### Are schools safe for students?

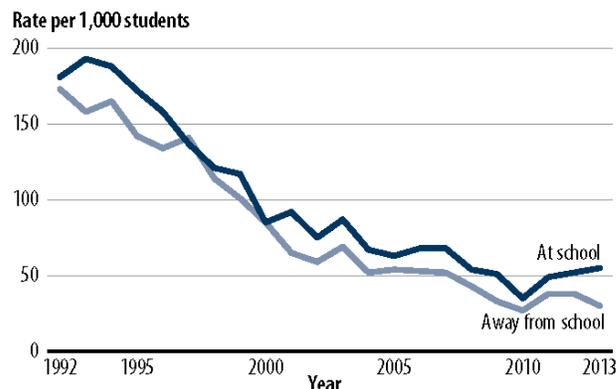
In 2013, approximately 3% of students ages 12 to 18 reported being victimized at school during the previous 6 months. Two percent of students reported theft, 1% reported violent victimization, and less than 0.5% reported serious violent victimization (rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated assault). Between 1992 and 2012 (the most recent data available), less than 2% of the total number of youth homicides (15 of 1,199 youth homicides) occurred at school.

Also in 2013, a greater number of students ages 12 to 18 experienced nonfatal victimizations (theft and violent crime) at school than away from school. A total of 55 nonfatal victimizations per 1,000 students occurred at school, while 30 victimizations per 1,000 students occurred away from school. The rate of violent victimization was also greater at school (37 per 1,000) than away from school (15 per 1,000).

### What are schools doing to keep students safe?

Nearly all students ages 12 to 18 observed at least one security measure at their school in 2013. More than 95% of students reported that visitors were required to sign in, 90% said school staff or other adults supervised the hallway, 77% observed one or more security cameras at school, and 76% said entrance or exit doors were locked during the day.

**Rate of total nonfatal victimization against students ages 12–18 per 1,000 students, by location: 1992–2013**



Note: See figure 2.1 in the report

Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), 1992–2013.

During the 2009–10 school year, 43% of schools reported the presence of one or more security staff at least once a week. Additionally, 28% percent of schools said security staff routinely carried a firearm.

### What is the school environment like for students?

In 2013, 3% of students ages 12 to 18 reported that they were afraid of being attacked or harmed at school or on the way to and from school. Two percent of students reported avoiding at least one school activity or class, and 4% reported avoiding one or more places in school during the previous year because they feared attack or harm.

About 12% of students said gangs were present at their school in 2013, with a greater percentage in urban areas. More than 1 in 5 students said they were bullied at school, and 7% said they were cyber-bullied during the 2012–13 school year. Between 1993 and 2013, the percentage of students who reported carrying a weapon on school property in the preceding 30 days declined—from 12% to 5%.

The full report (*Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2014*, NCJ 248036, BJS web, July 2015), related documents, and additional information about the Bureau of Justice Statistics can be found at [www.bjs.gov](http://www.bjs.gov).



## Son of Boston Police Captain Charged in Terror Plot to Use Pressure-Cooker Bombs at University

Mia Ray Langheim

School Intelligence Officer



US News, July 13, 2015

<http://www.usnews.com/news/us/articles/2015/07/13/son-of-boston-police-captain-charged-in-terror-bomb-plot>

BOSTON (AP) — The son of a Boston police captain has been arrested in an FBI sting and accused of plotting to commit terrorist acts in support of the Islamic State group, including the setting off pressure-cooker bombs at an unidentified university and the slaughter of students live online.

Alexander Ciccolo's father alerted authorities last fall that the younger man had a long history of mental illness and was talking about joining the Islamic State, according to two law enforcement officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to release details.

Ciccolo, 23, of Adams, was charged in a criminal complaint unsealed Monday with illegal possession of a firearm for receiving four guns July 4 from a person cooperating with the Western Massachusetts Joint Terrorism Task Force. Because of a drunken driving conviction, Ciccolo was barred from having a gun.

Ciccolo's father, Robert Ciccolo, is a 27-year veteran of the Boston police force.

"While we were saddened and disappointed to learn of our son's intentions, we are grateful that authorities were able to prevent any loss of life or harm to others," Ciccolo's parents said in a statement.

In court papers, the FBI said Ciccolo, also known as Abu Ali al Amriki, had talked with the cooperating witness in recorded conversations in June about his plans to commit acts inspired by the Islamic State.

Ciccolo initially talked about killing civilians, police officers and members of the U.S. military but later said he wanted instead to attack a state university outside Massachusetts because more people would be there, according to the FBI. The FBI said the attack would include executions of students, broadcast live over the Internet.

The day before his arrest, agents watched Ciccolo at Wal-Mart buying a pressure cooker similar to those used in the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings, the FBI said.

His attorney, David Hoose, did not immediately return calls for comment.

Ciccolo first came to the attention of the terrorism task force on Sept. 11 last year, when a close acquaintance — identified by the two law enforcement officials as Ciccolo's father — told the FBI that Ciccolo had expressed a desire to go overseas and fight for the Islamic State, according to court papers.

The acquaintance told the FBI that Ciccolo had a long history of mental illness and in the last 18 months "had become obsessed with Islam." The person also told the FBI he had received texts from Ciccolo in which he said America was "Satan" and Americans were disgusting.

The FBI said Ciccolo told the cooperating witness he planned to attack the university with assault rifles and explosives, focusing on dorms and the cafeteria during lunch because it would be packed with people.

He also allegedly said that if a student was a Muslim, "he would be permitted to help, sit tight or leave." Ciccolo told the witness that the Boston Marathon bombing gave him the idea of using pressure-cooker bombs, the FBI said.

The FBI said it found several partially constructed Molotov cocktails, two machetes and a long curved knife during a search of his apartment.

After Ciccolo's arrest, he grabbed a pen during a jailhouse medical screening and stabbed a nurse in the head, according to the FBI.

The FBI and Department of Homeland Security had warned recently of a heightened terror threat tied to the Fourth of July. FBI Director James Comey said last week that the FBI believes it stopped acts of violence in the month before the holiday with the arrests of more than 10 people, but he gave no details.

Ciccolo is scheduled to appear in federal court in Springfield on Tuesday for a bail hearing.

### School Safety Newsletter

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